

MDT Certifies AARP Curriculum for Insurance Discount



MDT Director Jim Lynch

Director Jim Lynch recently announced that MDT has certified the AARP Driver Safety Program as a valid highway traffic safety program. This allows participants to qualify for auto insurance

premium reductions under Montana law.

“The AARP Driver Safety Program is a nationally known, comprehensive defensive driving course designed for the older driver to help improve driving skills,” said Lynch. “As the Governor’s Representative for Highway Safety, I have reviewed the course and certify that it is consistent with the goals of the highway traffic safety program.”

MDT certification means that drivers 55 years or older who successfully complete the course may receive reduced auto insurance rates. “Now it’s official that insurers are required to give participants a discount on their auto insurance when they take the AARP Driver Safety course,” said Montana Commissioner of Securities and Insurance Monica Lindeen. “If folks find that their insurer is unwilling to grant a discount after taking this course, they need to contact my office.”

AARP State Director Bob Bartholomew added, “My hat goes off to all the people involved in this process to allow participants in the AARP driver safety course to receive a discount on their auto insurance. Many people were involved

in making it happen and I would like to thank everyone who played a role – this is quite a victory for consumers.”

The AARP driver training program is consistent with the overall goals of Montana’s Comprehensive Highway Safety Plan (CHSP), specifically in the emphasis area of reducing older driver crashes. The Montana CHSP identifies statewide traffic safety issues and sets aggressive goals for reducing fatalities and crashes. MDT is working with law enforcement, emergency responders, tribal governments, public health agencies, local governments and other stakeholders to meet these goals.

“AARP is committed to keeping the roads safe for everyone and helping drivers stay safe as long as possible,” said Art Buckley, AARP Montana Driver Safety Program state coordinator. “Last

year over 3,500 Montanans attended over 250 AARP Driver Safety Program classroom courses to help improve their driving skills.” Now people have the option of taking the AARP course in a four-hour classroom setting or online.

“Our goal is to keep people on the roads safe and alive,” Lynch said. “If this discount encourages drivers to take the class that teaches and reminds them how to drive

safely, then we’re one step closer to reaching this goal.”

The AARP Driver Safety Program is the nation’s first and largest driver improvement course designed for drivers age 50 and older.

Since its inception in 1979, the program has helped millions of drivers stay safe on today’s roads. Available in a classroom and online setting, the course is open to AARP members and non-members of all ages, and there are no tests. For more information, visit <http://www.aarp.org/drive> or call 1-888-AARP-NOW or (1-888-227-7669).

“Our goal is to keep people on the roads safe and alive. If this discount encourages drivers to take the class that teaches and reminds them how to drive safely, then we’re one step closer to reaching this goal.”

MDT Director Jim Lynch

MDT Honored with Two Engineering Excellence Awards



MDT Director Jim Lynch accepting two engineering excellence awards from the American Council of Engineering Companies of Montana. Pictured to the right are team members Sarah Nicolai of DOWL HKM (middle) and Jean Riley of MDT (right).

On November 4, Director Jim Lynch accepted two engineering excellence awards on behalf of MDT from the American Council of Engineering Companies (ACEC) of Montana at the Montana Engineering Honor Banquet. The awards were for the US 93 Corridor Study and the Billings Airport Road project.

The US 93 (Missoula to Florence) Corridor Study received the 2010 ACEC Excellence Award in the Studies, Research & Consulting Engineering Services category. Team members included Sheila Ludlow, Lynn Zanto, Shane Stack, and Jean Riley from MDT; Sarah Nicolai from DOWL HKM, as well as, Darryl James and Jennifer James, formerly from HKM.

The study area encompassed the US 93 Corridor from Florence to the intersection of Brooks and Reserve in Missoula. Here side street access onto US 93 is becoming increasingly difficult and traffic is projected to exceed capacity on the northern section during peak travel hours. The team conducted planning-level analysis of the existing transportation system taking into consideration social, economic, and environmental constraints. The study identified both short-term and long-term roadway and policy options to improve operations within the planning horizon. Options included improving transit and multimodal operations, spot improvements at some intersections, and possible policy changes for local growth and development to be carried out by the local governments.

The Billings-Airport Road Project was honored with the 2010 ACEC Excellence Award in the Transportation category. Team members included Fred Bente, Stefan Streeter, Gary Neville, Don Vanica, Mike Taylor, Tom Shupak (retired), and T. J. Ramaeker from MDT; and John Shoff (formerly DOWL HKM) and Teri Swenson from DOWL HKM.

The project involved designing and constructing a new roadway on existing alignment. The purpose of the project was to relieve congestion and improve the safety and flow of regional truck traffic. Project limits began just west of the entrance to the Billings Logan International Airport at the intersection of MT 3 and Airport Road and continued east on Airport Road to the intersection with Main Street (US 87). The design included widening Airport Road to four lanes with center turn lanes, construction of a multi-lane roundabout at the entrance to the Billings Logan International Airport, and a grade-separated intersection at Alkali Creek Road and Airport Road to improve mobility for local traffic from the Billings

Heights. The project included landscaping, pedestrian and bicycle trails with grade-separated crossings, and minimized impacts to historic and recreational facilities.

For more information, contact Jean Riley at 444-9456 or jriley@mt.gov.



Pictured left to right are ACEC Montana Executive Director Jay Skoog, DOWL HKM Transportation Engineer Teri Swenson, and MDT Billings District Administrator Stefan Streeter.



Billings-Airport Road Project was honored with the 2010 ACEC Excellence Award in the Transportation category.

Highways Dedicated to Montana Troopers

This fall, Governor Brian Schweitzer, MDT Director Jim Lynch, and Highway Patrol Colonel Mike Tooley dedicated portions of highways in the Kalispell area to three Highway Patrol Troopers killed on Montana highways in the line of duty. Troopers David Graham, Evan Schneider, and Michael Haynes were honored for their dedication, service, and sacrifice.

Trooper Graham, 36, died in a traffic crash in October 2007. His patrol vehicle was struck head-on by an inattentive driver who crossed the center turn lane. US 2 between Kalispell and Columbia Falls has been dedicated to Graham.

Trooper Schneider, 29, died in August 2008 in a crash on US 2 near Columbia Falls. Schneider was following a vehicle when it sideswiped an oncoming pickup forcing the pickup's driver to lose control and crash head-on into Schneider's patrol car. The two people in the pickup truck also died. The section of US 2 between Columbia Falls and Hungry Horse was dedicated to Schneider.

Trooper Haynes, 28, died from injuries suffered in a March 2009 crash. Haynes was patrolling US 93 north of Somers when an impaired driver traveling northbound in the southbound lane struck his vehicle head-on. A section of US 93 north from the junction with Montana 82 was dedicated to Haynes.



Governor Schweitzer unveils one of the highway dedication signs.



The highway dedication signs for Troopers Graham, Haynes, and Schneider, who were killed on Montana highways in the line of duty. Photos courtesy of Daily Interlake.

Increased Traffic Enforcement During Holidays

There were 19,344 crashes during the holiday season over the past five years in Montana. Of those crashes, 1,581 involved impaired drivers and 456 involved unbelted vehicle occupants. These crashes resulted in 1,195 fatalities and incapacitating injuries.

To decrease the fatalities and injuries on Montana's roadways during this year's Christmas and New Year's holidays, local police and sheriff departments, tribal law enforcement, and the Montana Highway Patrol will be increasing their patrols. This program is known as the Selective Traffic Enforcement Program (STEP) and is funded by MDT. Combined, these law enforcement agencies cover 80 percent of Montana's population. This program focuses on roadways with a history of high alcohol-fatality rates and low seat-belt usage.

Montana has a secondary seat belt law, so drivers can only be ticketed when stopped for another offense, such as suspected impaired driving. Speed-related stops by law enforcement can also lead to citing drivers for impaired driving and occupant restraint violations. Please remember to buckle up anytime you get in a vehicle.

When you host a party and serve alcoholic beverages, remember to offer non-alcoholic beverages to designated drivers. Keep the phone numbers for local cab companies handy, and ask for the car keys from anyone who is thinking of driving while impaired. You can be held legally responsible for the damage an impaired driver might cause after leaving your party. Please drink responsibly and have a fun and safe holiday season for everyone's sake.

For more information, contact Angie Mullikin at 444-7301 or by e-mail at amullikin@mt.gov.



Kurt Sager, Montana Highway Patrol Traffic Safety Resource Officer. The Highway Patrol, along with local police and sheriff's departments, will be increasing patrols this holiday season.

McBroom Named MDT Multimodal Bureau Chief



Doug McBroom

Doug McBroom was recently named the Multimodal Programs Bureau Chief for the MDT Rail, Transit and Planning Division. In this position, McBroom will oversee the Transit and Special Studies sections.

Most recently, Doug worked as MDT's chief chemist in Helena's Materials Lab where he was responsible for research, development and the function of the lab. He spent nine years at the Mission Mountain School at Condon as academic dean and program supervisor,

as well as chair of the math and science department. Doug was a research assistant in biochemistry and a graduate teaching assistant at the University of Montana where he graduated with an emphasis in chemistry. He holds a master's degree in biochemistry and a doctorate of education in education leadership from the University of Montana.

A native Montanan, McBroom grew up in Missoula and he and his wife Jennifer have three children, Alex 16, AJ 12, and Abby 10. His passion is to participate in triathlons and his biggest thrill recently was to have his oldest daughter compete by his side.

To contact Doug, call 444-7289 or send an e-mail to dmcbbroom@mt.gov.

Kazimi Named Statewide & Urban Planning Supervisor



Zia Kazimi

Zia Kazimi is the new supervisor for the Statewide and Urban Planning Section replacing Lynn Zanto who moved on to become MDT's Rail, Transit and Planning Division administrator. Zia has a master's degree in public administration and brings 17 years of federal and state transportation-related experience to his new position. Most recently, he was MDT's Special Studies supervisor.

In his new position, Zia's responsi-

bilities include coordination of transportation planning issues in Montana's 15 urban areas, including managing the multi-million dollar Urban Highway Program, which provides federal and state funding for projects on the urban highway system. Zia will also manage statewide planning efforts including TranPlan 21, MPO's, Statewide Plan, MDT's rest area plan, Montana's scenic byways program, urban traffic forecast modeling and the development of pre-NEPA corridor plans that analyze socioeconomic, environmental, and engineering issues to determine long-range transportation needs.

To contact Zia, call 444-7252 or send an e-mail to zkazimi@mt.gov.

Old Man Winter Calls on Montana

As winter weather settles over Montana, motorists are encouraged to check the MDT Road Report before they travel. Dial 511 or go online to www.mdt511.com to learn about road conditions for a region or a specific route.

MDT's road report covers much of the 24,500 lane miles MDT maintains, relaying timely information on travel advisories, driving conditions, weather forecasts, road construction, road closures, and major delays.

The 511 Web site includes a new winter condition map that includes a layer for camera images with winter travel information updated every 30 minutes or as major changes occur. MDT has more than 35 web cameras and more than 65 Road Weather Information Systems (RWIS) deployed at various locations statewide. During severe winter weather, the cameras are often the most visited pages on MDT's Web site.

Motorists should be aware that conditions can change quickly from the time



they access the road information to the time they make the trip. Motorists are also encouraged to follow these important winter driving tips:

- Conduct a pre-trip vehicle inspection to ensure the vehicle is operating properly. Fluid levels, wipers, belts, hoses, headlights, brake lights, and tires should all be in good condition.
- Keep the vehicle's windows, mirrors, and lights clear of snow and ice.
- Drive with headlights on.
- Do not use cruise control on wet, icy, or snow-covered roads.

- Drive an appropriate speed for conditions. Driving too fast for conditions is often a primary contributing factor in crashes.
- Be aware of potentially icy areas such as shady spots and bridges.
- When approaching a snowplow from the rear, reduce speed immediately. Snowplows must operate at slower speeds to properly plow and sand. Be patient and don't crowd the plow. The plow operators know the road well and will pull over as soon as there is a spot for vehicles to safely pass. When approaching an oncoming plow, don't crowd the center line.

For more information on winter driving and winter survival tips, go to http://www.mdt.mt.gov/publications/docs/brochures/winter_maint/winter_survival.pdf

Transit Tales

Transit Application Due Date Changed

Transit applications for financial assistance are due Monday, March 1, 2010. Traditionally, applications have been due February 1. The additional month was added to give Transit providers the opportunity to negotiate contracts with the Department of Health and Human Services (DPHHS) to provide transportation services. Federal Transit Administration funding can be matched with federal DPHHS transportation funding. Matching these two sources of funds leverages transportation dollars so they can be used to provide the greatest benefit for riders.

Please note that coordination plans are required with all applications. Any community interested in starting a rural general public transit service should contact the regional planner assigned to its area. Application for Financial Assistance, Coordination Outline forms, and contact information can be found at www.mdt.mt.gov/business/grants_transit.shtml. For more information, contact David Jacobs at 444-9192 or dajacobs@mt.gov.

Safe Routes to School Application Deadline Fast Approaching



The Montana Safe Routes to School (SRTS) application deadline, December 31, 2009, is fast approaching. The SRTS program can provide financial support for schools and communities to promote

safe walking and biking to school for children in grades K-8.

Two examples of the type of activities supported by Montana's SRTS program are walking school buses, (see adjacent article) and infrastructure improvements like sidewalks and bike racks. SRTS can reimburse up to 100 percent of the cost of a SRTS project.

To contact the new SRTS coordinator, e-mail Taylor Lonsdale at taylor.lonsdale@coe.montana.edu, or call 994-7031.

For more information, go to <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/saferoutes/> or contact MDT's bike pedestrian coordinator Mark Keefe at 444-9273 or mkeefe@mt.gov.

MDT Selects WTI to Administer Safe Routes to School Program

MDT will partner with the Western Transportation Institute (WTI) to deliver the Montana's Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program. MDT developed the SRTS program following 2005 federal legislation that, for the first time, provided dedicated federal funding for state-level programs to encourage children to walk and bike to school.

The SRTS Program is dedicated to improving the health of kids and the community by making walking and biking to school safer, easier, and more enjoyable.

Since 2006, MDT has awarded nearly \$2 million to fund community-based projects. Projects must support improving student safety within two miles of K-8 schools. Projects include non-infrastructure endeavors, such as education and enforcement initiatives, and infrastructure projects such as signing and sidewalk improvements.

SRTS is funded through an annual Federal-aid highway apportionment and is a 100 percent federally funded and reimbursable program that requires no local matching funds.

Try a Walking School Bus

A walking school bus is a group of students accompanied by one or more adults who walk or bicycle a pre-planned route to school. Routes can begin from a certain neighborhood or from a parking lot, to accommodate students who live too far away but want to participate. They can be scheduled as often as the participants wish. Adults often take turns as chaperons. For more information, go to <http://walkingschoolbus.org>.



A walking school bus waits to safely cross the street.

Fred Robinson Bridge Near Malta Turns 50

by Jon Axline, MDT Historian

On August 16, 1959, over 5,000 people converged by automobile, airplane, and boat at a remote site on the Missouri River about 60 miles northeast of Lewistown. They were there to celebrate the opening of a new bridge across the river, the culmination of a 40-year effort by residents of the area to build it. The structure was later designated the Fred Robinson Bridge by grateful Montanans for the man who worked so hard to get it built.

Beginning in 1920, businessmen, ranchers, and farmers from Fergus, Blaine, and Phillips counties joined together to push for the construction of a bridge across the Missouri River between Malta and Lewistown. Only six ferries operating seasonally existed; there were no river crossings between Fort Benton and Fort Peck, a distance of some 430 river miles. The crusade gained momentum in 1922 when influential Lewistown newspaperman Tom Stout was elected chairman of a committee to pressure the Montana Highway Commission into building the bridge. By 1929, the committee had gained sufficient influence in the Montana legislature that it directed the commission "to make necessary examinations and surveys preliminary to the location for construction of [a] highway bridge over the Missouri [River]."

The commission presented its report to the legislature in 1931. Of the six Missouri River sites it investigated, the commissioners recommended two to the legislature: the Power Plant site southwest of Hays and the Rocky Point site near Wilder Crossing south of Malta. Because of the lower overall cost of the project and the more direct connection between the Hi-Line, Lewistown, and Billings, the commissioners chose the Rocky Point site as its preferred location. Before the legislature could take action, Montana plunged into the Great Depression which temporarily ended any serious consideration of the bridge for the foreseeable future. Despite that, delegations from Phillips, Blaine, and Fergus counties met occasionally with the commission about the bridge. One of those representatives was Phillips County Senator Fred Robinson.

Born in Tennessee in 1889, Fred Robinson came to Montana in 1911 and took up a homestead claim north of Wagner in Phillips County. He worked on the Milk River Irrigation Project and owned a general store in Wagner before enlisting in the Army during WWI. Upon his return to Montana, he served as Phillips County Assessor and co-owned an automobile business in Malta. In 1936, he was elected to the State Senate, until his retirement in 1960.

In January 1945, Robinson, with help of the media and legislators from his region, successfully lobbied the 29th Legislature to pass House Joint Resolution 1, essentially a reiteration of its 1929 ruling. The highway department bridge engineers developed a modern seven-span steel girder lay-out and conducted an economic study of the bridge's benefits. Despite all the work put into the project, the highway commission did not have enough money to build the structure. Consequently, the Lewistown-based Missouri River Bridge Association and the Highway 19 Association from

Malta began aggressively seeking new financing possibilities, including the possibility of building a toll bridge. Senator Robinson claimed that bonds raised to build the bridge could be retired after 15 years if the state charged two dollars per passenger vehicle. He added that the people in central and north central Montana wanted the bridge so bad that it did not matter where it was built as long as it was built. The passion of the bridge's promoters impressed Governor John Bonner, who was attending the meeting. He ordered yet another study to find a way to

finance the bridge as soon as possible. The toll bridge idea never materialized as the commissioners found a way to finance the bridge. Because the site of the proposed bridge was located on federally owned land within the Charles M. Russell National Wildlife Refuge, the federal government would pay the full cost of the structure.

In October 1956, the commission awarded a contract to the Wyoming-based N. A. Nelson Construction Company to build the new bridge. The construction, however, proved a logistical nightmare for the contractor. The construction site was located 31 miles

from the nearest railroad terminal at Roy. The building material had to be trucked in from Roy over a road that was "mostly a trail of the worst kind of gumbo imaginable." The materials could only be hauled during periods of dry weather. Nelson established a trailer camp at the bridge site, which is currently the Bureau of Land Management's recreational facility. To accommodate the workers, the company drilled a well, laid water and sewer pipes, and built a small electric light plant. Despite the amenities, the contractor's superintendent, Earl Rook, later remembered that he "had more trouble keeping experienced men on the job than on any job he [had] ever built."

The contractor installed two concrete mixers, a three-bin aggregate batcher, and steam boilers near the bridge's south abutment. The firm also built a temporary timber trestle on the upstream side of the site that provided access to the pier foundations. Once the foundations had been excavated, the contractor used an electricity-powered tram to transport the concrete from the mixers to the point of delivery. The contractor worked two 8-hour shifts per day while excavating the foundations and one 8-hour shift per day while the piers were being poured. Workers completed the bridge's concrete substructure in December 1957.

The structural steel did not arrive in Roy until June 1958. Because the roads were nearly impassable, the contractor could not begin trucking the steel to the construction site until the end of the month. To meet the contract deadline, the Nelson Company expanded its work schedule to 9-hour days, six or seven days a week. The company opened the bridge for traffic on March 27, 1959. The final cost of the structure was \$716,633.

The dedication ceremonies for the bridge occurred 4½ months later. Chief Justice James Harrison was master of

... Continued on next page



Fred Robinson Bridge *continued from previous page*

ceremonies at the event, which included speeches by many Montana and Canadian dignitaries, including Montana Governor J. Hugo Aronson and Senator Fred Robinson. The Malta radio station broadcast the proceedings live throughout central Montana. Robinson provided six steers for a barbecue, with other food and condiments supplied by community organizations throughout central Montana. Bands from Malta, Chinook, and Havre provided live entertainment for the celebrants.

Governor Aronson and Robinson symbolically opened the bridge by sawing a cottonwood log in half at the structure's north end. Speeches were given at a speaking platform set up at the south end of the bridge. After Stout's opening speech about the history of the campaign to build the bridge, he was followed by mostly self-congratulatory addresses by the other speakers. Chief Engineer Fred Quinnell praised Senator Robinson and his associates for their "courage, persistence, and perseverance to make the dream a reality." The Fred Robinson Bridge concluded a 40-year effort by central Montanans to provide a connection between the north and south sides of the Missouri River. The bridge's significance manifested itself in the dignitaries and thousands of people who attended the event at the remote site in north central Montana. The Fred Robinson Bridge celebrated its 50th birthday this year and remains an important landmark in central Montana.

Department of Commerce Offers Bridge Funding Workshop

The Department of Commerce is offering a workshop on Wednesday, February 3 in Bozeman on how to make the Treasure State Endowment Program (TSEP) work for your county. Learn how TSEP grants can help improve county bridges and how to make TSEP grant application competitive.

TSEP construction grants can be used to replace deteriorated bridges. Last session, construction grants for bridge projects were awarded to twelve counties, including Beaverhead, Blaine, Carbon, Fergus, Jefferson, Lewis and Clark, Madison, Powell, Ravalli, Stillwater, Sweet Grass and Yellowstone. These counties will use \$3.4 million dollars in TSEP grants to help replace 33 bridges.

The next round of construction grant applications are due by April 16, 2010. Please contact Jim Edgcomb at 841-2785 or Richard Knatterud at 841-2784 if you have questions or if you are interested in attending the workshop. The location of the workshop is tentatively set for the Wingate Inn in Bozeman. A preliminary engineering report is required as part of that application, and you need to be working on that now to be ready for next April.

TSEP officials rank the applications and make recommendations to Governor Schweitzer. The Montana legislature awards the grants.



Solicitation for Research Topic Statements

In support of its mission to serve the public by providing a safe, cost-effective transportation system, MDT sponsors a variety of research efforts. The goal of this research is to evaluate and advance new technologies, materials, and methods; develop design and analysis techniques; and study current transportation challenges.

The MDT Research Section is always on the lookout for new research ideas. Topics can be submitted at any time by anyone; however, they are only considered once a year and are due by December 31.

Research ideas should be submitted on the Research Topic Statement form (see link below) and should be relatively brief, preferably not more than two pages long. The topic statements should include:

- Title
- Topic statement
- Research proposed
- IT components
- Urgency and the probable benefits
- Implementation plan
- Your name, title, affiliation, address, and phone number
- Champion and sponsor information (optional)

When the Research Section receives topic statements, an internal champion and sponsor will be sought for each topic statement if one is not listed. You are encouraged to speak with your peers within MDT to match your interests with our needs. This discussion often yields a champion for your research idea.

For information on past and current research projects, visit http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/projects/sub_listing.shtml. Further information and topic statement forms are available at <http://www.mdt.mt.gov/research/unique/solicit.shtml>, or contact Sue Sillick at 444-7693 or ssillick@mt.gov. Please transmit completed forms to Sue Sillick by December 31, 2009.



MDT's mission is to serve the public by providing a transportation system and services that emphasize quality, safety, cost effectiveness, economic vitality and sensitivity to the environment.

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Newsline is a quarterly publication of the Rail, Transit and Planning Division, Montana Department of Transportation.

MDT Wants Your Comments

To receive a list of highway projects MDT plans to present to the Transportation Commission, visit http://www.mdt.mt.gov/pubinvolve/docs/trans_comm/proposed_proj.pdf, or give us a call at 1-800-714-7296. You can mail your comments on proposed projects to MDT at the following address or e-mail them to mdtnewprojects@mt.gov.

MDT Project Analysis Chief
PO Box 201001
Helena, MT 59620-1001

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Contact Information

Only the most frequently requested numbers are listed here. For an area or person not listed, call 800-714-7296 (in Montana only) or 406-444-3423. The TTY number is 406-444-7696 or 800-335-7592.

Administrator (Lynn Zanto)	444-3445
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Bicyclist/Pedestrian (Mark Keefe)	444-9273
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Highway Traffic Safety (Priscilla Sinclair)	444-7417
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Map Orders.....	444-6119
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MDT attempts to provide accommodations for any known disability that may interfere with a person participating in any service, program, or activity of the Department. Alternative accessible formats of this information will be provided upon request. For further information call (406)444-3423, TTY (800)335-7592, or the Montana Relay at 711.